

LARUUNASH, A NEW RELIGION

Personal Background:

This brief introduction is about a religion, and it was written with profound awareness of certain things whose value will outlive not only individual human beings, but possibly humankind as well. Still, somebody has to claim responsibility for the inevitable mistakes herein. As will be reemphasized below, this religion is not based on any revelation, and none of the tenets stated here is claimed to be derived from ‘sacred’/nonhuman sources. Therefore, I feel an obligation to start with some facts about the author.

I, Anseynol, am a moral agent, a political philosopher, a scientist, and an artist –among other things. Especially since my teenage years, religious matters had been central to how I understand and guide myself. My parents, all my relatives, and almost all adults I knew as a child were Muslims –with a wide range of piety. I was given what I now consider to be a pitifully shallow education in Islam. I embraced Islam with more zeal and passion than some adults in my environment, and made some modest efforts to educate myself. Nevertheless, even for a few years (as a teenager) when I defined myself as an ‘Islamic fundamentalist’, I had not read the Qur’an in my native tongue (Turkish). (Note that I do not say that I am Turkish –I do not associate myself with any national or ethnic group.) I ‘fell out’ of Islam in early 1980, right around when I turned 18. For a while, I was a genuine Deist, maintaining a belief in a single, omnipotent Creator, a creator whose ‘perfection’ had not been grasped by any theology that I was aware of. My change of faith from Islam to Deism was very cautious, based on a good deal of thinking, but in the end quite decisive. This change had been the most important change in my life up to that point.

Later, and I do not know exactly how much later (a year or longer?), I became an agnostic. One of the main reasons that I got out of Islam was this: The Creator who is believed by Muslims to be the author of the Qur’an did not sound ‘perfect’ to me. I felt that the only way that I could maintain a faith in a perfect being was to admit ignorance regarding things like ‘the problem of evil’, the reconciliation of free-will and predestination, life after death, last judgment, many souls burning in hell, and so on. Embracing that ignorance, I maintained my *faith* in a perfect Creator. By the time I began to define myself as an agnostic, I had serious doubts that the Creator of this universe could be both omnipotent and benevolent –then again, I knew I had no proof against the possibility of more creators than one. Theoretically, my abandonment of the idea of a perfect creator must have been the most important change in my religious views. But, somehow, the change from Deism to agnosticism was far less circumspect and far less agonizing.

In late 1980, probably around late October or early November, I laid the foundations of my political philosophy, which dictated to me my greatest mission. (My book “On the Threshold of ...” is the best expression of my political thoughts.) At around the same time, I began to take notes for an open-ended book of religious dialogues between believers and nonbelievers of many kinds. One forceful character in the dialogues has an

‘antitheistic’ voice, sounding quite assured that a Creator who is still around can only be a cruel monster –with undeniable streaks of genius, kindness, and generosity. Another voice is more cautious and less melodramatic, but perhaps shares with some others in the dialogues a mixture of sympathy and admiration for the ‘Captain Ahab’ character. That voice counsels *active suppression* of such speculations, at least in the interest of sanity and ‘energy conservation’. Many conflicting approaches are presented in the book, without repeating the dogmas of any of the common religions of our time. The book will end with different suggestions to the perplexed/suffering audience and future generations who may struggle with the same questions. I still intend to complete that book, which I once thought of entitling “I Heard Them Saying ...”. I believe that this book will be one of the best things that I can leave to future generations.

For many years, though, I was concerned about the timing of the book, and even about my being open about my religious views. I fully intend to be a leader (just *one* of the many leaders) of a global political movement. That movement will have a good many obstacles and enemies, owing to its many radical proposals. I was afraid that I could do some disservice to that movement, if I also sought to establish a religious community. As years progressed, however, I became convinced that I have an obligation to make clear my religious views –come what may. I am also aware that the ideas and values summarized below may remain relevant and useful long after the realization of the goals that form the foundations of the political movement.

A New Religion?

The doctrine that I will outline here may or may not appear to some readers to be a ‘religion’. I, for one, would not be offended by those who refuse to grant our faith that title. However, I must insist that these ideas form a more or less complete set of beliefs that serve as a ‘religion-substitute’.

The central belief in Laruunash is this: The ‘actualized belief’ in the superiority and desirability of goodness, active adherence to virtues, and work in the service of goodness should come, at least in the eyes of the believers, *before* faith in cosmic entities, *before* obedience to any power, *including the Creator*, if ever we are confronted with Oo (this is my proposed pronoun for the Creator, instead of He, She, it, or they). The word Laruunash is a completely new invention. It has no etymological history, nor was it intended to sound like any word that I know. It is quite probable that it sounds like certain words in the thousands of languages that are spoken today. It must be understood that, like many words that I invented, this word is proposed *temporarily*. When humankind has a new artificial language, this word can be replaced with another.

I propose ‘laruuni’ as the temporary word that refers to a believer in Laruunash. One brief (and inadequate) answer to the question “Who is a laruuni?” is this: “A laruuni is someone who is dedicated, above and beyond his/her own interests, to doing good deeds, learning about and seeking ways of improving the lot of humankind, spreading good, and ‘maintaining’ the fruits of goodness. Theology is not central to Laruunash.” Put differently, faith in different theologies is to be treated with indifference by laruunis. We do not consider the question of whether or not a Creator exists to be an ‘unanswerable

question'. (Who knows? Maybe it will be answered one day.) Nor do we argue that the answer should be positive or negative. Some of us may find it necessary to be searching for an answer to this question. Some others may have given up hope. All the same, it is our certainty about good and evil that defines us and brings us together.

One reason why such an answer can only be woefully inadequate is that 'goodness' can be, and indeed *is* interpreted in many different ways by different people. We fully accept the inevitability of this diversity of perception and interpretation. We also understand that many acts intended to create, maintain, and spread goodness may result in harm, or downright 'evil'. Nevertheless, we firmly believe that there are forms of evil that all laruunis should fight against. All (able-bodied) laruunis should be united, seeking also the collaboration of other believers and nonbelievers, against such evil. We also believe that there must be a huge overlap between the sets of good causes and deeds that we each define and rank for ourselves (so that we can focus on what we do share, rather than where we disagree).

Whether or not believers in other religions and those who follow no religion take ours as a religion, they must understand a few things that are unique about us. I list below some of them. These are not the most important things to know about us. What I said before about our dedication to goodness, adherence to and pursuit of virtue, etc., are indeed the things that represent us best. I hope that many believers in other religions and many nonbelievers already share those (to some extent). Among the first things that should be known about us is our willingness and preparedness to work with people of other faiths and with nonbelievers in our service to goodness and in our fight against 'evil', shared problems, etc. What follows are the things that they may not share with us. Still, we are confident that some of them will continue to work with us in spite of the following. I must also add that the following are not in a descending order of importance; they may not be the full list of things that are exceptional about us; and some of the items are related to each other.

1. We accept no supernatural authority, no doctrine, and no dogma that orders us to go against the interests of humankind (directly or indirectly). We do not believe that the commandments of a Creator can justify us to do irreparable harm to innocent human beings (or to unreasonably overpunish guilty human beings). We acknowledge the inevitability of conflict between human interests, and between human beings and other species. We make no claim that we could resolve each such conflict to the satisfaction of all parties. We simply state that, in our efforts to resolve such conflicts, we do not recognize a 'higher authority' than direct or indirect human interests. Until species from other planets, or Oo present themselves, we refuse to prohibit or legitimize any human activity based on the presumed wishes of Oo, other deities, or other entities that are believed to rank higher than humans. Some may say to us, for instance, that we have a communal obligation to please God/the gods, and that the obedient believers and/or 'the innocents', as well as we, can be the victims of God's/the gods' wrath. While we cannot prove that such an indiscriminate vengeful 'divine' act is impossible, we refuse to forfeit our independence as moral agents to the multitude of faiths that

portray different gods with different tastes, personalities, and records of wrathful acts.

2. We are fallibilistic. We understand that well-intentioned people (as well as ill-intentioned people) can make mistakes. (I myself am a fallible person who makes mistakes almost every day; and I have changed my mind about a few important things, even after I became an agnostic.) Instead of denying our ignorance and weaknesses, we try to define limits to the ‘power’ of our religious leaders, and seek to reduce unintentional harm. We also believe that we can, if we so choose, learn from our mistakes and the mistakes of others. It is clear that many believers *demand* certainty in their faith, and are accustomed to the claims that their leaders are infallible. Our open declaration of our fallibility is not intended to serve as a recommendation to seekers of certainty that they should look elsewhere (other religious communities, etc.). We believe that no other religious doctrine can make realistic or truthful claims to infallibility. Certainty can indeed be found in a limited number of scientific fields and disciplines (at least for a period of time). It is my belief that it is impossible to bring comparable levels of certainty to the kind of issues that all religions (as far as we know) have to cover.
3. Our religion does not require faith in any ‘prophets’, ‘saints’, and ‘divine leaders’. We even question the need for full-time leadership positions. We consider it our moral obligation to remain open to ideas that can guide us in greater service to goodness. Therefore, we believe that we must clear all obstacles to good ideas, proposals, etc., wherever the latter may come from. If we end up having leaders, their superior roles must involve rights and responsibilities of *implementation*, and not an unquestioned right to make single-handed decisions. Never hesitating to borrow ideas, etc., from all sources, including from our opponents and unkind critics, we strive to base our decisions on science (guided also by our dedication to good, alleviation of suffering, etc.). While science can offer little or no predictive ability regarding entirely new ideas and methods, it can at least be used in evaluating and controlling the consequences of such methods. (Voting, ‘democracy’, ‘protocol’, and the like are also to be avoided as unreliable rituals.)
4. Since we dedicate ourselves to goodness, and greedily seek virtues, questions about ‘the good life’ are central to our searches and struggles. At the same time, we acknowledge that many factors, some of which may not be clear to us at this point, make it unrealistic to expect that each laruuni can attain ‘the good life’, as he or she understands it. Among the factors are the complications and distortions brought by socially-, economically-, and sometimes environmentally-imposed obligations. We also understand that not every laruuni can or needs to be in pursuit of an entire gamut of virtues cherished by laruunis in general. Nor do we find it useful to have a vision of a singular ‘paragon of virtues’ whom everybody should strive to model himself/herself after. We acknowledge the need for a plurality of personalities that embody different sets of virtues. Differences in abilities, talents, and geniuses may be clear grounds for the expectation that human beings will end up with different virtues. Differences in ‘temperament’, and ‘personality’, though more subject to change, may continue to be decisive in

the inevitability of plurality. We also admit that, sometimes, weaknesses and ‘vices’ may end up serving various good causes.

5. Connected to our acceptance of fallibility, we also believe in the possibility of progress in many (but not all) spheres of human activity. We recognize that mistakes may sometimes lead to learning and progress. While we accept that great mistakes can be great teachers, we try to make sure that our mistakes remain small. We believe that all humans are obliged not to cause irreparable damage to our environment, and we are resolved not to jeopardize the future of our planet, or allow nonhuman beings to do so. Progress, in many instances, can be a way of solving or alleviating problems that are common to many human beings. Sometimes, it may be the best form of ‘charity’ that we can offer to our critics and opponents. Sometimes, it may come from others; in which case it would be our moral duty to adopt it, pay for it, support it, advocate for it, and try to improve on it.
6. We believe that one of the most critical ‘religious’ obligations we have is to organize ourselves both in opposition to what we see as evil, and in our efforts to create and/or maintain products of goodness. Aware of our limitations, we emphasize *prioritization* as one of our central missions. As we attain success in certain ‘battles’/struggles, and as new emergencies arise, our priorities are bound to change. In determining our priorities, we seek to collaborate with believers and nonbelievers who share our scientific approach to understand and/or to solve problems. In other words, instead of trying to set our beliefs and values ‘in stone’, we recognize our need to change our priorities depending on changes in our social and natural environments –remaining true to our values, of course.
7. At present, we declare nuclear weapons and nuclear technology to be our first targets. We believe that humankind’s entry into the nuclear era, the use of nuclear weapons on civilians, the nuclear tests that followed, and the continuing race to create and maintain nuclear weapons had been the single most consequential set of acts of evil. (The absence of immediate and sweeping punishment on humankind following the bombing of Hiroshima makes me doubt the characterization offered to us by many different faiths of a wrathful God/wrathful gods.) Until this evil is eradicated, we may not have an agenda with a higher priority (things like a catastrophic meteorite threat to our planet or extra-terrestrial attacks may theoretically acquire higher priority). We make our peace with the fact that believers in different faiths will always have different priorities and agendas, and we refrain from forcing them to see things our way. Still, we have no doubt that we are justified in joining forces with others toward the realization of the following general goals: The destruction of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, the abolition of the nuclear industry, and the cessation of the dissemination of nuclear know-how.
8. We understand the nuclear threat as an accidental last stage of a continuing escalation of threat in the antagonism among organized human societies. This present antagonism happens to be among ‘nation-states’. It is conceivable that a similar, perhaps even worse, form of antagonism could exist among societies

other than ‘nations’ –say, religious communities. All the same, people of our faith denounce nation-states as criminal organizations, and reject the idea of ‘nationhood’, as well as any other hereditary social formations. Laruunis are expected to declare their opposition to human antagonism, to territorialist, coercive, and inculcationist nation-states. I hope that all laruunis will have the courage to refuse to serve their ends. Specifically, laruunis should be prepared to resist serving in national armed forces (as distinct from serving in supranational, peace-keeping or peace-making armed forces); they should refuse to pay taxes that finance human antagonism; and they should refuse to serve in any way that maintains/strengthens the antagonistic capacity of nation-states.

9. We do not accept that states or powerful religious communities have a right to force their understanding of ‘justice’ on their inherited members (citizens) and neighbors. We intend to show them the need to apply scientific skepticism, caution, and experimentation to matters of justice/the Law. Rather than taking for granted the ‘right’ of states and religious organizations to make sure that their laws, etc., continue to exist (unchanged), we stand up for the rights of single and organized individuals to seek truth, virtue, and justice in their own ways, as long as they do not harm other human beings and/or the flora and the fauna. Where we believe that a state, etc., punishes innocent people, we consider it our moral obligation to protect and advocate for the innocent. Where we believe that a state, etc., condones or rewards acts that are demonstrably harmful to humans (directly or indirectly), we should at least press for the punishment of such acts.
10. In accordance with our consequentialistic moral stance, we believe that human beings should try to compensate for their own crimes and mistakes. Therefore, while we fight against unjust punishment (by states or other organizations) of fellow laruunis and nonbelievers, we also enforce stringent rules on fellow laruunis to compensate for their harmful actions (including those that they committed before embracing our religion). Even/Especially when laruunis harm nonlaruunis, our religious organizations are expected either to force the responsible laruunis to compensate fully, or (in case that the responsible parties die, or are not apprehended, etc.) assume the responsibility to compensate on behalf of wrong-doers. Those laruunis who believe in an afterworld, and/or divine justice are also obliged to make sure that they are prepared to compensate fully *in this world*. We are opposed to forms of punishment where states and other organizations punish the guilty in ways that do not redress the grievances of those who were harmed (and/or their dependents). In case laruunis fail to save fellow laruunis from such punishment (i.e., when offender laruunis are imprisoned or mutilated), we should still insist on our communal moral obligation to compensate.
11. We are ‘universalistic’; but we do not expect to be embraced by the majority of humankind. Like other ‘universalistic’ religions, we believe that no racial, ethnic, social, etc. group of human beings is to be banned from joining us. But we also believe that our religion can appeal only to a tiny minority of people. Unlike believers in other religions, we do not even entertain the *hope* that all humankind

will, one day, embrace our faith. We believe that ours is a religion for people who have the courage to accept enormous responsibilities toward humankind and to the flora and the fauna. It appears to this laruuni that the vast majority of humankind are cowards, and they are unwilling to sacrifice their (perceived) interests for the sake of their needier neighbors, or for the environment. Not only do we have to accept a serious shortage of courageous people, but we also have to understand that many courageous people will never join our ranks. Certainly, there are many courageous and self-sacrificing people who are members of different faiths, and there are many who will remain nonbelievers. Laruunis are expected to collaborate with them (and show respect and gratitude, where necessary).

12. It is clear to us that compulsory indoctrination of children in (one of) their parents' faith is the most effective method that ensures the 'geographic' distribution of religious communities on this globe. As effective as this early indoctrination is, we declare a unilateral refusal to indoctrinate children (anybody's children) in our faith. We confess ignorance as to how and when different people reach maturity (we sadly acknowledge that many reach old age without reaching maturity, and some lose their 'maturity' after having reached it); but we, tentatively, choose age 18 to be the age at and beyond which we will feel justified to share our faith with youngsters. We remain committed to understanding more about what constitutes 'maturity', 'moral responsibility', 'sanity', and we hope to collaborate with scientists of all faiths in our search for a deeper and more reliable understanding of these. We also hope to make scientific advances in determining what kinds of grown-up people may not be held responsible for their actions (and cannot, therefore, be accepted as laruunis). We seek to collaborate with believers and nonbelievers in establishing guidelines for a nonreligious *moral education* of children, one that tries to teach them, among other things, boundaries to their rights and interests, and the bases of their responsibilities to other human beings, as well as the flora and the fauna.
13. As (imperfect) students of the human condition, we find our species engaged in a wide range of destructive behaviors toward other life forms with which we share this planet. While we hold no species to be superior to our own, we also consider it immoral (or a 'mortal sin') to cause the extinction of entire species, or even the destruction of ecosystems that are essential to the continuation of human life on earth. We advocate changes in the ways we live, for the purpose of easing our burden on our different environments. However, we feel that 'lifestyle changes', even if they are adopted by the vast majority of humankind, would not suffice to reverse the dangerous course that was created by humans in the last few centuries. We recognize that the present global human population is not sustainable at any level of technology. Therefore, we refuse to have children, or to approve of the procreation of other human beings. We accept as fellow laruunis those who have had children in the past, if and only if they acknowledge their procreation as crimes against fellow human beings and other species, and if they continue to make amends for their crimes. We understand that the pronatalistic doctrines and practices of many other religions are partly responsible for our present level of

population, and thus for the degraded state of many of the world's most vital ecosystems. We consider it our moral obligation to try to communicate to them the reasons why they should, *at least temporarily*, change their positions regarding population issues.

14. Our opposition to human procreation is intended to be temporary, until the global human population is reduced to a sustainable level. We make clear that we neither condemn nor glorify sexual conduct between consenting adult humans (be they heterosexual, homosexual, or any other conduct). Rather than being categorically good or bad, we understand human sexual relations to have the potential to bring about both good and bad consequences (sometimes both for the same person). We urge our fellow laruunis to seek higher good in their pursuit of sexual pleasures; but we do not condemn their sexual activities, unless they cause harm to others.
15. We acknowledge that goodness did not start with us. We assume that some virtues that we strive to cultivate in ourselves (like 'mutual aid'; protection of and compassion toward the young and the weak; self-sacrifice by parents, elders or concerned strangers; collaboration within and between species; standing up to bullies; etc.) had been traits displayed by members of many species long before human beings even existed. If we differentiate between humans (who can rightly claim more intentionality and planning concerning their actions) and the rest of animals, we can safely maintain that we have made considerable progress both in our understanding of virtues and in attaining spectacular results with our virtuous acts. Even though some of the most glorious examples of success in virtuous deeds are relatively recent, we acknowledge that much of the groundwork upon which we have built is thanks to unnamed billions whose religions are nearly or completely 'dead' today. Specifically, we understand that more than 90% (not that percentages are important here) of the story of human existence involved human societies that were hunters, gatherers, and fishers. The religions that are dominant today show a heavy agrarian bias; we feel that they are less than kind to the legacy of our prehistoric ancestors. We appreciate much of what agrarian and settled human societies accomplished. At the same time, we are aware that our (tainted) success could not have been possible, if we had not inherited a rich flora and fauna, and virtually untouched mineral resources, from our pre-agricultural ancestors.
16. While we strive to understand, appreciate, and preserve what we value in the record of our ancestors (as well as trying to learn from other species), ours is a religion that is adamantly opposed to certain tenets of one of the oldest and most resilient religions: Ancestor-worship. Not only do we not take for granted that our ancestors were better than us, we do not even preach respect for the elderly and/or for parents simply because they are elders or parents. Our focus is on virtues, skills, ideas, strategies, actions, previous record, and the like, rather than on the human beings who come up with these ideas, etc., or who propagate them, or who put them to practice. We do support and advocate the rewarding of people based on their (past) record; but at no point should we stop questioning, evaluating, and criticizing the actions of those whom we recognize to be superior/exemplary in

their fields. This principle is one of the many reasons why I myself, as the current advocate of this religion, should not be the focus of anybody who is serious about studying Laruunash. What matters is whether or not the ideas are sound, applicable, conducive to the spread of goodness and/or to moral growth, and certainly not whether or not I may be an exemplary person (a good ‘ancestor’ to worship after I am gone).

17. As I stated before, we accept fallibility in our social, political, and scientific endeavors. We also believe that progress is still possible in unlimited fields. However, we believe that no political, religious, scientific, or other body has the right to impose a ‘forced march’ on the unwilling toward what the former may perceive as progress. We believe that those who desire progress should be given the freedom to pursue it; but they should also be held responsible for any harm that may result from their efforts and/or from what they create. The principle that we propose for all humankind is this: Progress should be fully ‘insured’ by those who hope to benefit from it. We are ‘consequentialistic’ in our approach to human responsibility. Wherever possible, individual agents of ‘progress’ or scientific endeavor should be forced to pay full compensation for the harm they cause. Where the harm is too great for the above to compensate for, the entire community of those who ‘insured’ the enterprise should pay the compensation. Where progress brings more benefit than harm, the scientists, financiers, et. al., should be given the right to ‘sell’ the fruits of the progress to those who had not financed it, or supported it in some other way (that can be proven to impartial judges previously accepted by both sides). It is our hope that some laruunis will be qualified to bring cautious progress to more people than those in their own communities. When such progress is evident, some laruunis may demand reward for their work; some may choose to donate their labors and ingenuity to their communities or to humankind. Most laruunis are expected to work toward the creation of full accountability of ‘progressive’ efforts on a global basis.
18. We are not ‘messianic’; in other words, we do not believe that certain problems are destined to remain unsolved until a chosen being is sent (again) to this world. Nor do we believe that this world will soon be destroyed, and/or that human existence on this planet will be brought to an end by a divine power. While we cannot prove the impossibility of either messianic or doomsday visions, we consider it a ‘sin’ to endanger the future of our planet. Scientifically, we may have to accept that our sun will turn into a red giant in a few hundred million years, and that the Earth will be doomed close to that point. It is conceivable that some other inescapable cosmic catastrophe may terminate life on Earth long before the solar catastrophe. Nevertheless, we operate on the moral principle that human beings should work *in collaboration with people of other faiths* so as to make sure that it is cosmic forces or divine will that put an end to (human) life on this planet –not human stupidity and destructiveness.
19. We collaborate with believers and nonbelievers for social, political, and economic programs that aim to improve human lives. Our diverse views on what programs may bring about more good, differences between our political opinions and

commitments should not hide from us our duty to be each other's watchdogs, and to learn from each other. One project and political vision that may or may not bring together all laruunis is the abolition of *unearned/unelected, chronic human poverty on earth* (UCHPE). Whether or not they share my political commitments to specific remedy programs for the abolition of UCPHE (which I outlined in my political work), laruunis should work individually and collectively to alleviate UCHPE, and fight against the human and nonhuman agents that perpetuate UCHPE. We do acknowledge the right of adults to choose poverty, and the fact that some adults, through their bad choices, earn their poverty. But we consider it criminal to perpetuate the poverty of children, entire families, villages, neighborhoods, and castes of people. I, for one, believe that UCHPE can be abolished within less than two generations, provided that a wide variety of socio-economic programs are implemented successfully, along with a global and decades-long control of human births.

20. Once a global birth control program brings the total human population on this planet to a level that is sustainable, we can afford to set far higher standards for each and every child that will be borne after the abrogation of that program. As one laruuni, and as a political agent, I propose for that period an economic system whereby which subsistence will be guaranteed for each and every child *before* giving birth to it. In other words, enough wealth, shelter, resources, means of transportation, and a large enough land should be secured or collectively guaranteed for each and every child before its conception. This is intended to be one of the most radical attempts at safeguarding future generations from the harm that is due to the socially-imposed obligation to 'work'. I, as one laruuni, believe that future generations can be brought to a level of civilization where they can eliminate not only the social obligation to work, but much of the biological and zoological struggle to subsist. I hope that some laruunis will initiate and/or join efforts toward the creation of an economic system that will make pre-guaranteed subsistence a reality.
21. While we consider it one of our religious obligations to create global accountability, and while we oppose many human endeavors the consequences of which cannot be confined to controlled environments, we also consider it one of our moral obligations *never to obstruct good deeds* (except in the service of greater goodness). We should remain vigilant against 'progressive' efforts that are 'uninsured'; but we should also support/insure progressive efforts that appear to be promising. We may compete with believers in other faiths; but we should always allow them full access to their individual potential to do good, as well as access to their fair share of resources, to create greater glory than us. Since laruunis are condemned, for the foreseeable future, to remain a tiny minority, and to the extent that 'there is strength in numbers' (and wherever there are 'economies of scale'), we should only be happy to see greater good coming from religious communities other than ours. Not standing in the way of goodness is, clearly, a principle we should remind ourselves in our dealings with each other as well. In fact, we should be aware that many of our good deeds can also be obstacles to greater good that we are capable of doing...

22. As stated under item 8., laruunis are expected to question existing laws, especially those imposed on them by nation-states. Laruunis are also expected to be critical of existing moral codes, and try to improve on them by a strict adherence to scientific and humanistic values, as well as laruunis' defining dedication to goodness and opposition to evil. Undoubtedly, many cultures and subcultures of our time place too little value on acts of lasting goodness. Intentionally or otherwise, most societies reward acquisitive behavior that also happens to be destructive to the environment and/or likely to 'diminish the pie'. Laruunis should collaborate with others to change existing moral codes, even economic systems, in favor of the charitable people in all communities, and in favor of people whose contributions are likely to leave the planet in better shape for future generations. Our dedication to goodness should manifest itself in our preparedness to reward people of all faith groups who do good work. It may never be within our power to sufficiently reward the righteous. In fact, we may not even succeed in making the world 'safe for charitable people'. Still, laruunis, including those who believe in rewards in the afterlife, or in future reincarnations, should join efforts with nonlaruunis to show their appreciation of good people and good work. Laruunis should take special care to seek and reward charitable/compassionate children and other 'nonadults', and try to protect them from those who either try to take advantage of them, or punish them for their virtues. While some laruunis should make themselves a reliable presence in the lives of charitable children and nonadults, others should try to explain to them why Laruunash is a religion only for those who demonstrate mental maturity.

The above are some of the ways in which Laruunash is different from most other faiths. I declare myself a poor student of comparative religions. Therefore, I am in no position to state that Laruunash is the only religion for which all of the above statements can hold true. Then again, it matters little if the above are new or old. It is important for others to understand that we remain hopeful that they will work with us, even though we are determined never to hide or forget the many points where we disagree with them.

As a firm believer in my own (and others') fallibility, I declare this document to be a 'work in progress'. It is offered to the general public with readiness to benefit from criticism. A list of more than 550 key concepts related to Laruunash can be found in a file named "Laruunash.WD2" on the same diskette/CD where you may have found this file (it is in Info Select 8 format). In that alphabetical list, I address some of the main topics that relate to Laruunash (as well as other religions). That file, too, is a work in progress. Since Laruunash is open to new ideas, new prioritizations, new projects, the future of this religion may depend less and less on my original theoretical work. And since we are determined to work hard toward the creation and spread of good, others will know us better by the fruits of our labor.

You may get in touch with the author and/or other laruunis by logging on to:
<http://laruunash.blogspot.com/>

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